Crop Profile Development for Florida Minor Crops

Final Report

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The purpose of this project initiated by the Pesticide Information Office at the University of Florida was to compile published, unpublished and expert input data on pesticide use and alternative pest management practices for selected "minor use" crops produced in Florida and to use this data to produce crop/pest management profiles for these crops. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the USDA Office of Pest Management Policy are the primary users of this information in the development of and review of the risk assessments for pesticides under review.

The funding from this EPA Region IV Agricultural Initiatives grant supplemented funding received in FY 1999 from the USDA Pesticide Impact Assessment Program and a grant from the USDA-CSREES Pest Management Alternatives Program to do a Beef cattle pest management survey and profile.

Results

Crop Profiles: To date 21 crop profiles have been produced for Florida and have been submitted to or are posted on the USDA Pest Management Center Web Page at http://www.pmcenters.org/. These profiles include:

potato (1/99)
strawberry (3/99)
major citrus (orange & grapefruit) (3/99)
tomato (4/99)
bell pepper (4/99)
ornamentals (5/99)
carrot (6/99)
sweet corn (8/99)
cantaloupe (6/01),
avocado (8/01)
minor citrus ("Tahiti" lime, Key lime, pummelo, kumquat) (11/01)
celery (10/99)
snap bean (10/99)
watermelon (10/99)
cucumber (6/00)
cabbage (6/00)
peanut (12/00)
cattle (2/01)
eggplant (3/01)
squash (8/01)
lychee, longan

Drafts of crop profiles for mango and papaya are in review before being posted and will be posted on the on the USDA Pest Management Center Web Page when the review process is completed.

A profile for guava is in preparation.

In addition to putting completed crop profiles on the USDA Pest Management Web Page, the profiles are formatted for the University of Florida Cooperative Extension electronic publication delivery

systemt called EDIS at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/MENU_PI.

Pesticide Use Surveys: The Agricultural Initiative Grant supported pesticide use surveys for cantaloup, squash and tropical fruit in Florida. The project developed the survey instrument for these crops. To obtain the data for cantaloup and squash copies of the questionnaire were provided to county extension faculty in counties where these crops are grown. The extension agents contacted growers and asked them to fill out the information. The results were tabulated by staff in the Pesticide Information Office.

The tropical fruit survey involved growers of tropical fruit crops in the South Dade County Agricultural area. The survey instrument was developed at the pesticide information office with the assistance of the tropical fruit specialist at the University of Florida's Tropical Research and Education Center (TREC) at Homestead. TREC staff interviewed growers to obtain the information . Staff at the Pesticide Information Office tabulated and summarized the findings which has been used in developing crop profiles for several of the crops included on the survey. The tropical fruit survey collected information for 19 tropical fruit crops: avocado, limes, kumquat, pummelo, mango, papaya, lychee, longan, guava, carambola, atemoya, banana, jackfruit, mamey sapote, black sapote, white sapote, sapodilla, Barbados cherry and wax jambu.

Several interruptions in carrying out the objectives for this project occurred during course the project. We hired a well qualified individual to work on this project after receiving the award. This person worked under the supervision of the Pesticide Information Specialist, a staff member of the Pesticide Information Office at the University of Florida. The individual developed several profiles, but left after 8 months to accept a post doctoral position. We had difficulty in finding a person with the experience to do this project. In late 1999, the Pesticide Information Specialist left to accept a position with a major agricultural commodity group in the state. We were unable to fill the vacancy until funding issues related to the position were resolved. The funding issues were resolved in late 2000 and we were able to fill the Pesticide Information Specialist position in January 2001. Active work on the crop profile projects resumed. Crop profiles will continue to be a priority. Existing profiles will be updated with new information and profiles for additional crops will be developed.